



## Press Release

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### **Disparities in breast cancer continue among U.S. women** *Report shows importance of improved access to preventive care and high-quality treatment*

Black women have higher death rates from breast cancer than any other racial or ethnic group. They are 40 percent more likely to die from breast cancer than white women, according to a [Vital Signs](#) report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Despite the decline in breast cancer death rates in the past 20 years, black women had higher death rates even though they had fewer new cases of breast cancer, the report says.

The report's findings highlight the importance of educating women about the preventive benefits and coverage provided by the Affordable Care Act, including coverage of mammograms without co-pays in many health plans and, beginning in 2014, the law will expand access to health insurance coverage for 30 million previously uninsured Americans.

"Although we are making progress reducing deaths from breast cancer, we have much work to do to reduce preventable deaths, particularly among African-American women," said CDC Director Thomas R. Frieden, M.D., M.P.H. "Only when every woman receives adequate screening, timely follow-up, and high-quality treatment, will the full benefit of breast cancer screening be achieved."

The researchers reviewed data on new cases of invasive breast cancer reported during 2005 through 2009 from CDC's National Program of Cancer Registries and the National Cancer Institute's Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results Program. Breast cancer deaths were based on death certificates submitted to National Vital Statistics System.

#### Major findings:

- About 40,000 women die of breast cancer each year in the United States.
- Black women have 9 more deaths per 100 breast cancers diagnosed compared to white women.
- Black women have higher numbers of advanced stage breast cancer (45 percent) compared with white women (35 percent).



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The report says better treatment and finding breast cancer early are likely responsible for half of the recent drop in breast cancer deaths. However, black women do not get the same quality treatment for breast cancer as white women, it says. Breast cancer is the most common cancer, and is the second leading cause of cancer death among U.S. women. A mammogram—an X-ray of the breasts—often can find breast cancer early, before it is big enough to feel as a lump, or cause other symptoms, and when it is easier to treat. Because of the Affordable Care Act, many private health plans and Medicare now cover mammograms and certain other preventive services with no copays or other out-of-pocket costs. Approximately, 5.1 million black women are estimated to receive guaranteed women's preventive health services without cost-sharing under the Affordable Care Act.

CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program provides low-income, uninsured, and underinsured women access to timely breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, five U.S. territories, and 11 American Indian/Alaska Native tribes or tribal organizations.

For information about CDC's efforts in breast cancer prevention, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast>.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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